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singer, who died in the middle of the sixth century of the Hijra; but M. O. G., for so he chooses to call himself, first applied it to translations and plays. It is with regret that we learn from Dr. Kern that the author has not met with the success that he deserves. Sentimental tragedy in classical garb holds the Egyptian stage against the humor of Molière.

A word on Dr. Kern's method. He is fuller and more complete than Dr. Sobernheim. His treatment of the principles underlying his transcription, of the meter, of pronunciation, and of the different methods of recitation is detailed and careful. His vocabulary and notes are also fuller. The Hebraist will find in them points worth his notice. See, for example, *din* and its bearing on Socin's explanation of *yādhôn* in Gen. 6:3. Generally, the book gives the impression of ripe scholarship. But it must not be thought that it has interest only for the Arabic scholar or for the student of modern Egyptian. That Molière can be adapted to Egyptian life shows how great a dramatist he was, bounded by no horizon—which everyone knew. But how it has been done is a study to be commended to the student of comparative literature; such will find material here.

DUNCAN B. MACDONALD.

HARTFORD, CONN.

### STUDENT'S HEBREW GRAMMAR.<sup>1</sup>

In these days, which have furnished so much work of a thoroughly scientific character in the field of Hebrew grammar, it is surprising that a book so lacking in scientific character, even though intended for beginners, can find publication or adoption. This book exhibits the same lack of scientific spirit which is to be found in nine out of ten Hebrew grammars prepared by Jewish rabbis for teaching Hebrew. It is not a sufficient excuse that such books are intended for practical use. Experience in the teaching of Latin and Greek grammar is surely enough to warrant the assertion that a grammar may be at the same time practical and scientific. Here the distinction must be made between that which is technical and that which is scientific. It is not necessary to be technical in order to be scientific. The grammar under consideration is neither technical nor scientific. It is equally clear that it is not practical.

The author (p. 4) makes no account of the distinction between vowels naturally long (*i. e.*, by contraction, or for nominal formation) and vowels tone-long (*i. e.*, long on account of proximity to the tone). This distinction lies at the basis of any practical or scientific treatment of vowel-changes. And consequently the article on changes in vowels (p. 13) is utterly devoid of any really true philological principles. The old statement of *hireq* arising out of two *š'wās* at the beginning of a word is a fair example. The general word "altered" is the only word used to designate

<sup>1</sup> STUDENT'S HEBREW GRAMMAR, with Exercises and Vocabularies. By Michael Adler, B.A., Minister of the Hammersmith and West Kensington Synagogue, and Senior Hebrew Master at the Jews' Free School, London. London: David Nutt, 1900. viii + 196 pp.; 12mo.

vowel-changes, the ordinary word "shortening" being absent, not to speak of such words as "deflection," "obscuration," "heightening," which have now become common words in grammatical vocabulary.

The relative pronoun  $\cdot\text{שֵׁ}$ ,  $\text{שֵׁ}$  is given as a contraction of  $\text{אֲשֶׁר}$ , a view long since abandoned. The meager statement is made (p. 22) in connection with the pointing of the inseparable prepositions: "the vowel  $\text{ֿ}$  is frequently used," without any explanation of the fact. The pointing of  $\text{לֵי}$  in  $\text{לְאֶמֶר}$  is simply cited as peculiar, no light of any kind being suggested. This is not practical, for a beginner should be taught principles; nor is it scientific, since it furnishes no explanation.

The chief characteristic of the segholate is said to be "that the absolute state of the plural has the vowels  $\text{ֿ}$  and  $\text{ֿ}$ ." Could anything be more absurd? A fine example of logical arrangement is the treatment under one head (pp. 56, 57) of the  $\text{הִי}$  interrogative, the  $\text{הִיֿ}$  directive, and the vocative use of the definite article  $\cdot\text{הִי}$ . The  $\text{נִ}$  of the Niph'al is said to be omitted in the future, etc., and a Dāghēsh added; the term "assimilation" does not appear to have been known. Likewise, in connection with the  $\text{פֿ}$  verb (p. 124) it is said: "Whenever this  $\text{נִ}$  is omitted, a Doghesh is placed in the next letter." The Hōph'al is said to have  $\text{ֿ}$ , but no explanation of the fact is hinted at.

Most faulty, however, is the treatment accorded the  $\text{עִ}$  and  $\text{עִ}$  verbs. Instead of furnishing the pupil at least a modicum of information in the way of assistance, the space (twelve or fifteen lines) is occupied with such misleading statements as this: "The  $\text{י}$  added (!) in the Hiph. in other verbs is not found in this class" (p. 128). A strange and entirely erroneous distinction is made (p. 132) between  $\text{פֿ}$  guttural and  $\text{פֿ}$  verbs by which  $\text{אָסַף}$ , imperfect  $\text{יֹאסֵף}$  (also  $\text{יֹאֲסֵף}$ ,  $\text{יֹאֲסֵף}$ ), is treated as  $\text{פֿ}$ . The pupil is taught that this is the typical  $\text{פֿ}$  verb, while  $\text{אָמַר}$ , imperfect  $\text{יֹאמַר}$ , and the others like it, are special and exceptional. The time ought soon to come when, even in Jewish circles, such grammars would not be called for.

W. R. HARPER.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO.

### SCHULTHESS' HOMONYME WURZELN IM SYRISCHEN.<sup>1</sup>

This is a thoughtful and suggestive contribution toward the elucidation of some difficult questions of Semitic lexicography. Homonymous roots are especially common in such languages as have been compelled to denote more than one original, or current, sound by means of one alphabetic sign. Schulthess thinks that Syriac, because of the state and treatment of its sounds, is the best language to start from in the consideration of Semitic homonyms. The Edessan dialect of the Syriac especially, because of its fixed orthography, its freedom from foreign

<sup>1</sup> HOMONYME WURZELN IM SYRISCHEN. Ein Beitrag zur semitischen Lexicographie. Von Friedrich Schulthess. Berlin: Verlag von Reuther & Reichard, 1900. xii + 104 pp. M. 4.